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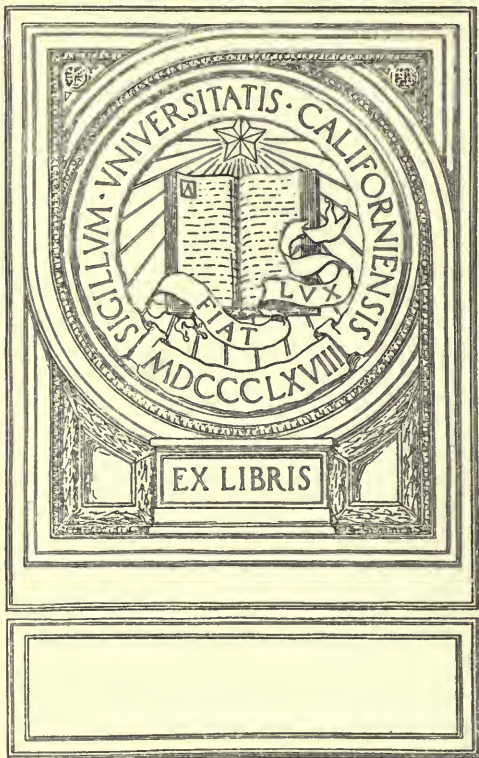
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IN WAR TIME

M. W. Cannan

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IN WAR TIME

P O E M S

BY

MAY WEDDERBURN CANNAN

OXFORD

B. H. BLACKWELL, BROAD STREET

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ANNUAL REPORT
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VOLUME

For a Friend

I THAT have tried to write how much I love,
 Keep in my heart unending love for you,
 Who showed me the royal road, and went your
 ways,
 Leaving me loneliness in all my days.
 Dear and best friend, you know that this is true,
 That there's a room hid deep within my heart
 Love-guarded and apart,
 To which you, and you only hold the key.
 My Dear, you gave so very much to me ;
 You were so strong and dear and kindly wise.
 Now I can wake the laughter in your eyes
 No more, nor hold your dear kind hands again,
 I know that I have reached Life's utmost pain,
 That shall not heal for coming of the day.
 My Very Dear, there is so much to say,
 So much I shall remember, so much set
 Within my heart. Starlight upon your spurs,
 Your hands upon the reins,
 And the quiet English lanes
 Lit with your bivouac fires ; and leafy Junes
 And the long lazy Summer afternoons
 Upon the river. And Northampton fields,
 Rain-clouded, all the pride

Of

Of Victory undarkened, when at your side
 I learnt of love that 's service. One hot August
 night
 War threatened : England and you and I,
 Do you remember how we said good-bye ?

Can you remember those quiet July days
 Under the shadow of the apple-tree ?
 I like to think you must have known that we
 Loved you. But when I think that Summer time
 will come,
 And willow-trees join hands across the stream,
 And that we shall not meet,
 That I shall tread no more the sun-flecked street
 Wind-shod to find you in the garden shade,
 My Dear, the dearest dreams that I have made
 Are lonely with the need and want of you.
 I am so very glad to think you knew
 How much we cared. You know that I shall hold
 Those days with joy untold,
 Our friendship as my dearest memory ;
 And you who were so dear a friend and true,
 I think—no, I am very sure that you
 Will keep some love within your heart for me.

April 1917.

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Acknowledgement is made to the *Westminster Gazette* and the *Oxford Magazine*, which first published seven of these poems.

POEMS OF PEACE

I sing Myself

*SINCE I ha' seen what I ha' seen
In one and twenty years ;
And I ha' been what I ha' been
With laughter and with tears :
Though you should lift your hands and tear
The sun from out the sky,
As old year turneth to new year
So turn I into I.*

August 1915.

‘ I would make a Song for You ’

I WOULD make a song for you ;
Jasmine flower and violet,
Primroses and mignonette,
And for Beauty Lenten lilies,
And for Laughter daffodillies,
In an English garden set.

I will make a song for you ;
Sap within the apple-tree,
(March shall follow February)
And white snowdrops, crown of snow,
And crocuses in golden row ;
April cometh certainlie.

I have made a song for you ;
Roses white and roses red,
(Summer shall be ’stablished)
And Love that doth belong to you,
Shall make now all sweet song for you ;
Summer comes when Winter ’s fled.

Spring

UP and down go the echoing feet
 Over by Magdalen Bridge—
 Up and down by the grey-walled town,
 And out on the Wytham ridge
 The wild flowers bend to the thought of March,
 And the rains have fashioned a rainbow arch
 Where the dancing waters meet ;
 The rainbow lights that the mists held fast
 Are ashine again where Spring hath passed
 With her primrose-sandalled feet.

Thus shall ye know she hath passed this way
 Or ever the flowers come forth ;
 By the quivering shade of a sun-fired glade
 And the low-swung stars in the North.
 She comes when the stars swing low to the moon
 With the glories of night in her sandalled shoon
 And the wild wide eyes of day,
 Her dusky hair with the crocus crowned
 And her fair white robes with the starshine bound,
 And her feet in the upland way.

Romance

SHE stands in the water meadows,
She leans from the grey-lined walls,
She haunteth the great curved roadway,
She laughs in the college halls.
The joy of the West and the strength of the North
Are written clear in her eyes,
And the love of the South hath made them soft
And the lore of the East hath fashioned them wise.
She stands in the sunset gardens
White robed 'neath a rainbow sky,
Till the shadows purple the velvet lawns
With the wind clouds driven by ;
She leans from the towers at daybreak
Till the shadows have passed away
And the dawn creeps up from the hill-tops
To herald another day.

To some it is given to find her,
Some kiss the hem of her gown ;
To me is it given to seek her
Through the heart of her grey-spired town.
I follow her through her gardens
A daughter of distant kin,
Some day when I knock at the Gateway
Maybe she will let me in.

Till

Till then I follow her footsteps
By meadow and street and lawn,
Hearing her pass in the night time
Hearing her voice in the dawn ;
And dream that some April morning
At the turn of a darkling stair
I shall come out into sunlight
And suddenly find her there.

The Song of a Canoe

OVER half the world away
Far across the sea,
There they stretched their hands and took
Soul and flame of me,
But my heart I found beneath
An English willow-tree.

Paddling down the great lakes
Just when I was made,
There I met the four Winds
And was unafraid ;
Rolling in the ground swell
Out across the bay,
There I met the sea waves
And sped them on their way.

Creeping past the barges,
Drifting down the Cher,
There I learnt my knowledge
Of the 'Things That Are ;
Swinging past the ferry
Where the eights go by,
There I learnt the wisdom
Of English earth and sky.

Driving

Driving up to Cricklade
Underneath the stars,
Rocking back and forward
On the gravel bars ;
Sweeping down from Lechlade
Under Eynsham bridge,
There I learnt of England
Out by Wytham ridge.

Anchored by the Willows,
There I learnt my song,
(Watch the dripping oar-blades lift
The trembling eights along !)
Sailing down from Iffley
On a July day,
I found the heart of England
To speed me on my way.

Favour of the English sky,
Water, weir, and tree,
When I first shook out my sail
Came swift-winged to me ;
Forward, for my bows have known
Touch of wind and sea.

Oxford

EVER her children come and go,
Restless feet on her broad highways,
Ever her river runneth down
Blue and green 'neath the alder sprays.

Ever her children come and go,
Joyful hearted and ardent eyed,
Ever she holds her hands to them,
Patient beyond all time or tide.

Ever her children leave her towers,
Echoing feet by night and day,
Ever her children come again—
O loyal hearts wide worlds away.

Ever she waiteth, sunset-fired,
Ever her river runneth down—
O weary feet from the ends of earth,
Come home at last to the grey-walled town.

From One Generation to Another

BECAUSE we watched awhile the lamps
That burn before the shrine ;
Because we led, a little while,
The changing vanguard line ;
Because we toiled, and left our work
To make another's gain,
Because we sowed, and might not reap,
And dreamed we toiled in vain ;
Because our names have lived awhile
For that which we have done ;
Remember us when we have gone,
Whose race is past and run.

Because you too will come and go
And hold yourselves forgot,
Leave us to dream that there are none
Who are remembered not.

*The Two Cities**Calcutta and Oxford*

OVER the city the grey clouds swinging,
 Endless dripping and fall of rain—
 Over the river the grey mists clinging
 Deadened the sound of the anchor chain,
 Deadened the sound of the tall ships singing,
 Setting forth on their voyage again—
O City of Spires with the clear bells ringing,
Lost in the lonely pitiless plain.

Over the river the sun lay dying,
 Dank and dark where the Ganges swirled ;
 Over the city a torn flag flying
 Leant to the white pole half unfurled ;
 Strong in the tideway the sea came crying,
 Calling the ships with the salt foam pearled—
O City of Towers in the green fields lying,
Holding thy hands to a desolate world.

Over the plains in the silence stealing,
 Night came bringing her gift of sleep—
 Gathering swallows on far lawns wheeling,
 Whispering limes where the shades lie deep ;

Sunset lights and a far bell pealing,
Out on the river the long oars sweep—
O Night, come swift with thy hand's cool healing ;
Thus must we sow that our sons may reap.

.

Over the marshes the dawn was breaking,
Faint with the heat and struggle of day ;
Out on the ocean the home-trail taking
The tall ships laughed in the wind-kissed spray ;
Far in the city their dreams forsaking
Woke they to work where the grey mists lay—
O City of Spires to a far dawn waking,
The echoes are faint on the world's highway.

The Hills of Home

MOORLANDS purple and gold and brown,
 Laughing burns that go dancing down,
 Sun-kissed hills where the winds blow free,
 Golden lights on a sunset sea ;
 Woods that are chequered with light and shade,
 Antlered heads in a forest glade,
 Rowan trees in their scarlet pride—
 Ah ! hills of home, but the world is wide.

Waters of Moidart clear and still,
 Quiet shadows on moor and hill,
 Mystical islands silver starred,
 Golden sands by the grey rocks barred,
 Creeks where the great tide eddies flow,
 Green sea flowers in the depths below,—
 O purple moors all dark with rain,
 All hillmen come to their hills again.

Moorlands lashed with the sleet and hail,
 Shrieking winds of a Northern gale,
 Cruel waves all white with foam—
 And the blown snow white on the hills of home.

Road of the moorland winding away
Purple and gold and green and grey,
Over the pass and the windy hill
Where the wild moor creatures roam at will,
And the red deer reigns in his royal pride—
And down again on the Roshven side.

Waves that are breaking on golden sands,
Bringing a message from far-off lands,
Narrow ways where the tides run deep,
Seaweed isles where the grey seals sleep,
Lonely cliffs where the sea-birds cry—
And afar the hills of stormy Skye.

Whispering waves in the still lagoon,
A garden asleep 'neath a rising moon,
Jewelled isles in the blue loch set,
That we afar can never forget—
*O hills of home, the world is wide,
But my heart comes home with the flow of the tide.*

The Blackbird: A Song of 1746

THERE came a whispered message from the
Southland,

That the Blackbird had whistled his desire—
There came a tale of battle to the Northward,
And we watched for the beacon fire.

But the warning came too late,
And now we watch and wait,
As we watched by the beacon fire.

There came a whispered word of wild disaster,
A word of warning spoken in the night—

There came a ring of steel upon the stairway,
And we watched as they rode to the fight.

They rode to the war
And we saw them never more,
But we bade them ride to the fight.

When the Blackbird calls they will ride forth again,
And we, we can but bid them go—

Voices calling in the darkness, voices calling in the
night,

And the years pass all too slow.

The night is wild with rain,
And they will not come again,
And the years pass all too slow.

Sunset at Corsock

FAR on the Corsock hills the waning light
Flickered upon the purple moors and died,
And the grey darkening shades of eventide
Creeping far upwards hid the vale from sight,
And all the clouds that drifted silver white
Grew soft with sunset shadows, till beside
Shone out the stars in all their royal pride
And o'er the earth was thrown the veil of night.

Then from the hills beyond the darkened lines
Of heather, and the glory of the moors,
Crowned with the golden light that only shines
From out the heart of the far sunset doors ;
Soft as the waves low lapping Solway's shores,
The winds of night came singing through the
pines.

The Call

I WILL go North again, for here I am forgetting
The lamps of moonlight swinging in the rowans
silver starred,
For it may be in the quiet of sunrise and sun-
setting
That I shall not remember that the road has been
so hard.

I will go North again, for I can hear no longer
In the hush of twilight stillness the voices of the
sea,
And it may be that the old loves over Time shall
prove the stronger,
And I shall find the lost friends that walked the
moors with me.

I will go North again, for here my heart is breaking
For the sight of lifting seaweed golden brown
beside the blue,
And it may be from the garden at the cool sea
dawn's awaking
I shall find the heathered roadways that long ago
I knew.

I will

I will go North again, for all the hills are calling,
I can hear the waves low lapping as they meet
the kindly sands,
And I know above the moor road the soft West
rain is falling,
And I would set my face to it and feel it on my
hands.

I will go North again, I will lie upon the heather,
I will take the old path shorewards where the
whin is all afire,
And it may be when my comrades and I have met
together
We shall find the old-time glories that our tired
hearts desire.

Switzerland

THERE came to me a voice of wind and hills,
Crying, ' Come out ! the faithful mountains
wait,

And there shall be delight and all the state
Of battle night and day.

' And there shall be low laughter in the hills
And silences of snow-time, and the sound
Of water lapping over thirsty ground :
These shall not pass away.

' And there shall be warm suns upon the rocks,
And the swift maddening music of hewn ice,
And lost endeavour for a sacrifice—
And dawn break into day.

' And there shall be blue skies against white snow,
And in the night a star above the pass ;
And wide-eyed gentians in the upland grass
To speed you on your way.

' And in the end the quiet of lone paths
And the long shadows creeping down the hill,
And Alpine flowers upon a window sill—
Twilight to comfort day.'

Devonshire

For a West Countryman

O DEVONSHIRE for a poor man is
The best of English land,
For there are bluebells in the wood
And a seashore with sand,
And Somerset and Cornwall are
As guards on either hand.

I will go down to Devonshire
And between the hills and the sea
I will find a grey stone house
That shall be a home for me,
And my home for all the friends I have
A home also shall be.

We'll build no covered house for hate
Or bitter jealousies,
But the English earth shall give us flowers
For our dear memories,
And wood to make slow-burning fires
To paint our odysseys.

I'll have a window that shall face
Both North and South the sea,

And

And in it always through the night
A great lamp shall there be
For all the sailormen who went
To sea in ships for me.

(For of all things in this wide world
That are most safe and kind
Is the lamp-light of a friendly house
That a man must leave behind,
For all lamps stand for gentleness,
And hope, and quiet mind.)

Wind-hidden deep behind the coomb
A Devon lane shall run,
And flowers grow along the banks
That wide are to the sun,
And all tired and earth-broken things
Shall reach the sea thereon.

Get you then back to Devonshire
If your heart is in the West,
For after a man's work is done
An old home is the best,
And earth and sky and memories
Shall serve him for the rest.

A Dream House

I WILL build me a house some day,
In the days when I am old,
And I will have warm-hearted fires
To keep me from the cold ;
And it shall be between the sea
And the lift of the English wold.

And I will have sun-dazzled lawns
With roses on each side,
And roses red and white to climb
My windows opened wide
That I may hear the seagulls call
And the lapping of the tide.

And there shall be quiet garden paths
And lilies at the gate,
And evening primroses to light
Lamps when the hour is late ;
Lest in the dark they pass my doors
For whom I watch and wait.

And I will have sad marigolds
For the dear dreams that die,

And

And white-starred saxifrage to speak
Of hills and open sky,
And speedwell round my garden's edge
To greet the passer-by.

And I'll have heather for the loves
That linger north of Tweed,
And lavender and rosemary
For such as are in need ;
And to crown all, upon the wall,
Garlands of Oxford Weed.

And to my house shall come the friends
I laughed with long ago,
And all who labour where the winds
That break men's high hopes blow ;
And they shall rest and hardly hear
Rose petals dropping slow.

And the long splash of breaking waves
Shall hush them night and day,
Until the restless strength returns
To send them on their way,
And they shall call good-bye and go
As those whose hearts are gay.

Night

TWILIGHT to darkness broke,
For that lost word with sorrow
Long I wept ;
At last God spoke,
‘ Have faith in thy To-morrow ’ ;
And I slept.

Dream Friends

WHEN the house is quiet and the footsteps
fade
In the long splash of the sea ;
When the voices are hushed and I am left alone,
The people of my dreams will come to comfort me.

When the last fight is over and I take the road
With Death for company ;
When the friendly faces fade and I am all alone,
The people of my dreams will stretch their hands
to me.

BEFORE THE WAR

To certain Detractors of Rudyard Kipling

BECAUSE he strove among his fellow men
And made his own their lives, their joys and
fears ;

Because he knew of Earth's first tenderness,
And the great wisdom of th'uncovered years,
He wrote, and fashioned laughter,
And wrote, and fashioned tears.

Because he drew the blind world as it is,
And not as weakling men would have it be ;
Because he knew the lowest depth of life,
And yet the heights of lowest depth could see,
He showed us in the world we know
Forms of Eternity.

Because he saw beyond the words men speak ;
Because, like us, he wrought with Love and Hate ;
Because he met Despair, and proved it false,
And chose the Little, knowing it the Great,
He wrote, and some of us that read
Reopened Friendship's Gate.

Because he saw naught common on the Earth,
And lent us eyes that we might understand ;
Because he taught us that the hopes were true
That seemed to have been writ in shifting sand,
 We lit us lamps whereby we read
 A new life for the land.

Because he watched the lamps that we forsook
To follow each of us his idle whim ;
Because he met with Life, and Death, and stayed
When long the dying lamps had flickered dim,
 We come, the darkness passed, to find
 The Light we owe to him.

May 1912.

The Case

WHEN fear is loose in the City and the shells
have reddened the dust,
They will come forth from the war-cloud pitiful,
wise, and just ;
Swift are their hands to the helping, tardy their
lips of speech,
Their feet are set on the strange roads that only
the strong may reach.
In the days of a hard-won plenty, when we bent
to a selfish ease,
They held for our good the Gateways at the rim
of the outer seas ;
In the days when we clung to our pleasures they
suffered and toiled and fought,
And gave their lives in the stillness ; and we jested
and called it naught.
In the time of our Darkest Trouble, in the Hell
of our Great Despair,
They went forth to the danger and the Death
that tarrieth there ;

Greatly they wrought in the war-cloud, greatly
they suffered and gave,
And came not back from the battle at the ebb of
the tidal wave.

And we who watched from the City fearing the
ebb and the flow,
Could not lift hands to their succour because that
we did not know.

In the silence that followed after, when we counted
our loss and knew,

We also would learn of their knowledge that we
might serve as they do.

When we faithless made of our war-time a Thing
with a soulless name,

We turned us back to our old lives, forgetting the
loss and the shame :

We sought a little their knowledge, and seeking it
found it hard,

And took our hands from the labour, leaving the
Gates unbarred.

In the time of Armageddon, in the days that shall
prove our worth,

When the weak shall waste of the road dust and
the strong shall inherit the Earth ;

In

In the time of the Days That Are Coming, when
a Throne shall strive with a Throne,
We shall call unto them for their succour, forgetting the fault is our own.

They will come to us from the Marches where
the Hope of the Empire lies
And jesting ride to the whirlpool for the last
great sacrifice.

They may bring us forth from the darkness to
fashion our lands anew,
But we shall have stood on the tide line knowing
not what to do.

When the scales are set for the Reckoning, when
the bad is weighed with the good,
We may not plead to the judgement that we had
not understood,

For the whole is written clearly and the Gates
stand wide to be barred,

And we know that our work is waiting and leave
it because it is hard ;

And the men that shall follow after when we and
our works are dust

Shall carve our shame on the tallies, ' They slept
and betrayed their trust '.

February-May 1913.

POEMS OF WAR

‘ I have made a Song for You ’

*I HAVE made a song for you ;
Sorrow cometh certainly ;
Buy a sprig of rosemary,
Rosemary for memory.*

*I have made a song for you ;
Love shall live eternally ;
Roses buy and rosemary,
Love endures, and memory.*

April 1917.

Gifts

TAKE you the sword,
The sword your fathers made for you,
Holding love and life itself things of little worth ;
Take you our hearts, our hearts that are afraid for
you,
Out to fight for England at the ends of all the
earth.

Take you our love
That shall unending live for you,
Out to hold the trenches in the shell-tortured
hours ;
Take you our lives, the lives we may not give for
you,
Out to join the battle where your love shall stand
with ours.

Take you our dreams,
The dreams that we forsake for you,
Dreams of love and happiness we wove in other
days ;
Take you our hearts, our lonely hearts that break
for you,
Out to bring you home again from peril-haunted
ways.

October 1915.

Friendship, 1914

FORGET me an' it please you, I'd not like
Some half-guessed thought of me to make
you sad,

But if there 's any memory of me
Or the old gay companionship we had
To make you happy, then remember me
And say ' We two were friends ', and I'll be glad.

Forget you loved me an' you will, I'll be
Content to know I filled an empty place
Within your heart, and if you think of me,
Remember only laughter in my face ;
But if you've need of love, remember me,
And say ' We two were lovers for a space '.

February 1917.

August 1914

THE sun rose over the sweep of the hill
All bare for the gathered hay,
And a blackbird sang by the window-sill,
And a girl knelt down to pray :
 ‘ Whom Thou hast kept through the night,
 O Lord,
 Keep Thou safe through the day.’

The sun rose over the shell-swept height,
The guns are over the way,
And a soldier turned from the toil of the night
To the toil of another day,
And a bullet sang by the parapet
To drive in the new-turned clay.

The sun sank slow by the sweep of the hill,
They had carried all the hay,
And a blackbird sang by the window-sill,
And a girl knelt down to pray :
 ‘ Keep Thou safe through the night, O Lord,
 Whom Thou hast kept through the day.’
The

The sun sank slow by the shell-swept height,
The guns had prepared a way,
And a soldier turned to sleep that night
Who would not wake for the day,
And a blackbird flew from the window-sill,
When a girl knelt down to pray.

March 1915.

‘Take not from Them’

TAKE not from them, O Lord,
The joy of rain-washed earth and starlit sky,
Seeing that they, surrendering all they had,
Rode out for us to labour and to die.
Seeing that we are many and they few,
If Thou hast any need of sacrifice,
Take us ! take us ! It is so small a thing
That it were cruel to will otherwise.

Give

Give them Thy world, O Lord,
In which to laugh and love in quietness,
Seeing that they went out to keep Thy Earth
From toil of lies and awful wantonness.
Seeing that they have laid down all they have,
If Death hath need of Life in this our War,
Let him take us. O Lord, if they should die,
Within our hearts Christ's crucified once more.

Give unto them, O Lord,
All gladness and delight Thou mayest give,
Seeing that we would reach our hands to Death
So willingly if only they might live.
Seeing that Thou hast taught us how to love,
Seeing that Love hath vanquished Death and
Pain,
Take us and break us if Thou wilt, O Lord,
But bring them safely from the war again.

July 1915.

Ballad of June 1915

I MADE a garden for my love
With roses white and roses red,
And I must gather rosemary,
For my love lieth dead.

I planned to plunder all the stars
To make a chaplet for his head ;
The rain beats on the window bars,
And my love lieth dead.

I meant to make a dream of days
With life by love and laughter led ;
I stumble over stony ways,
And my love lieth dead.

I made a garden for my love
With roses white and roses red,
And I must gather rosemary,
For my love lieth dead.

June 1915.

Any Woman

THE moon hath hushed the city,
The river runneth deep,
And I wonder where on God's green earth
You lay you down to sleep.

It is so still, the water laps
Low-voiced against the piers—
I wonder how the quiet lies
On tortured Armentières.

I wonder if you see the moon
Break blue on burnished steel,
Or if you sleep and wake to watch
The flaming lights of Lille.

Across the warm safe English fields
The sun brings up his day,
I live my life because in France
You give your life away . . .

There will be summer nights for me,
And poppies in the wheat—
O God, the bugles call so shrill
Across the empty street . . .

The

The sad stars pale, the dawn wind lifts
The roses on the wall ;
Morning, and noon, and sunset-tide,
To you I owe them all.

Across my heart the shadows sweep,
As shadows come and go ;
I'd give you all my world for thanks—
And you will never know.

July 1915.

To ———

From Flanders, August 1914

I DO not ask you, Dear, to give me love
Or even friendship in the coming years,
Only if loneliness should come to you,
Or you should meet with pain or any tears,
Remember one man lived for love of you
And dreamed for the grave kindness of your eyes,
And, since you smiled on him, became a god,
And made himself on earth a paradise.

July 1915.

To a Clerk, now at the Wars

HERE at your desk I sit and work,
As once you used to do ;
I wonder if you'll ever guess
How much I envy you.

You'll win a world I'll never know,
Who ride the barriers down ;
And my life 's bounded by a desk,
And the grey streets of a town.

From The War Worker, August 1916.

Evening

THE office fire burns low, the Autumn wind
Beats suddenly against the window-pane,
The low bowed heads bend closer to the page :
Turn up the lights, the days draw in again.

The door swings to and shuts, the workers wake
To evening and the end of throbbing day ;
A paper boy goes shouting down the street—
What news of England, half the world away ?

Put on the stamps, nor storm nor German hate
Shall cause one English keel to lose the tide ;
The streets are shadow dark, what news to-night
Of England out by Hooge and Yser side ?

For gain or loss the post goes on its way,
The stars shine pitiful ; beneath the light
Of blurred street lamps the telegrams are read—
Good news, and so, good dreams to you to-night.

From The War Worker, October 1915.

Rouen

April 26—May 25, 1915

EARLY morning over Rouen, hopeful, high,
courageous morning,
And the laughter of adventure and the steepness
of the stair,
And the dawn across the river, and the wind
across the bridges,
And the empty littered station and the tired
people there.

Can you recall those mornings and the hurry of
awakening,
And the long-forgotten wonder if we should miss
the way,
And the unfamiliar faces, and the coming of pro-
visions,
And the freshness and the glory of the labour of
the day ?

Hot noontide over Rouen, and the sun upon the
city,
Sun and dust unceasing, and the glare of cloudless
skies,

And

And the voices of the Indians and the endless
stream of soldiers,

And the clicking of the tatties, and the buzzing
of the flies.

Can you recall those noontides and the reek of
steam and coffee,

Heavy-laden noontides with the evening's peace
to win,

And the little piles of woodbines, and the sticky
soda bottles,

And the crushes in the ' Parlour ', and the letters
coming in ?

Quiet night-time over Rouen, and the station full
of soldiers,

All the youth and pride of England from the ends
of all the earth ;

And the rifles piled together, and the creaking of
the sword-belts,

And the faces bent above them, and the gay,
heart-breaking mirth.

Can I forget the passage from the cool white-
bedded Aid Post

Past the long sun-blistered coaches of the khaki
Red Cross train

To

To the truck train full of wounded, and the weariness and laughter,
And ' Good-bye, and thank you, Sister ', and the empty yards again ?

Can you recall the parcels that we made them for the railroad,
Crammed and bulging parcels held together by their string,
And the voices of the sergeants who called the Drafts together,
And the agony and splendour when they stood to save the King ?

Can you forget their passing, the cheering and the waving,
The little group of people at the doorway of the shed,
The sudden awful silence when the last train swung to darkness,
And the lonely desolation, and the mocking stars o'erhead ?

Can you recall the midnights, and the footsteps of night watchers,
Men who came from darkness and went back to dark again,

And

And the shadows on the rail-lines and the all-
inglorious labour,

And the promise of the daylight firing blue the
window-pane ?

Can you recall the passing through the kitchen-
door to morning,

Morning very still and solemn breaking slowly on
the town,

And the early coastways engines that had met the
ships at daybreak,

And the Drafts just out from England, and the
day shift coming down ?

Can you forget returning slowly, stumbling on
the cobbles,

And the white-decked Red Cross barges dropping
seawards for the tide,

And the search for English papers, and the blessed
cool of water,

And the peace of half-closed shutters that shut
out the world outside ?

Can I forget the evenings and the sunsets on the
island,

And the tall black ships at anchor far below our
balcony,

And

And the distant call of bugles, and the white wine
in the glasses,
And the long line of the street lamps, stretching
Eastwards to the sea ?

. . . When the world slips slow to darkness, when
the office fire burns lower,
My heart goes out to Rouen, Rouen all the world
away ;
When other men remember I remember our
Adventure
And the trains that go from Rouen at the ending
of the day.

November 1915.

January 1916

O HEART grown weary with the hope that 's
fled,

Poor desolate heart that leans to nothingness ;
O eager hands reached out to meet success,
Pity is killed and you have stones for bread ;
What will you do or how be comforted,
For all your prayers and all your soul's distress
And all your agonies are powerless
To give you back one moment with your Dead ?

O lonely heart, take courage on your way,
O empty hands, the world's work waits your will ;
Love shall endure being more than mortal clay,
Death has killed Joy, but Hope remaineth still,
Dawn shall bring dark, each hour an hour until
To-morrow slips star-shadowed to to-day.

January 1916.

‘ Since they have Died ’

SINCE they have died to give us gentleness,
And hearts kind with contentment and quiet
mirth,

Let us who live give also happiness
And love, that 's born of pity, to the earth.

For, I have thought, some day they may lie
sleeping

Forgetting all the weariness and pain,
And smile to think their world is in our keeping,
And laughter come back to the earth again.

February 1916.

Love, 1916

ONE said to me, ' Seek Love, for he is Joy
Called by another name '.

A Second said, ' Seek Love, for he is Power
Which is called Fame '.

Last said a Third, ' Seek Love, his name is Peace '.

I called him thrice,

And answer came, ' Love now

Is christened Sacrifice '.

August 1916,

The Younger Generation

SOMETIMES I almost hate them—in the
night

In the cold unheroic hours ere day,
When fame's a burnt-out torch and Love himself
Seems, broken-hearted, to have crept away—
And think when I am old and growing grey,
And hold my hands to a cold world forlorn,
These who will be so greatly, proudly, born
To a new England, built upon our tears
(Upon the desolation of our years,
Upon the bitterness of helpless tears)
Will nothing know of all our agony,
(Of hearts that hoped and broke tumultuously,
Of ships that will no more come home from sea)
And hold us servants of a time outworn.

I do not think that they will greatly care
For the dead past that calls and calls to me ;
For all their thoughts will drive them elsewhere
Unto their splendid future that will be.
France unto them will be a glorious name,
A glorious name, but, when all's said, a name ;
To me she is a flame,
And all her towns beads in a rosary :

And

And each bead has its prayer,

And each its agony.

Le Cateau, Loos, Givenchy, Aubers Ridge ;

Ypres, Neuve Chapelle, Vimy, and Antwerp

Bridge—

Sometimes I almost think they'll come to this,

And teach us Love ; since they have learnt to kiss.

O hush, poor passionate heart, these have known
youth,

These also seek for Beauty and for Truth ;

Time is a tide that will not turn again,

You have known dawn and nightfall, joy and pain,

Summer and Winter ; sunshine after rain,

And dark shall bring your dreams to you again. . . .

Courage, O lonely heart, you have been young

In days all-glorious.

Since youth is generous

Perhaps they'll give me very quietly

A little of their love and gaiety ;

Since I lost mine in England's agony,

Since my heart broke for England's agony.

O hush

O hush, poor passionate heart ; the faithful day
 Breaks over Armentières ;
 Though love is lost, hidden behind the stars
 (O heart, behind the cold unshaken stars !)
 Yet memory kneels near.
 Think that these also will meet joy and fear,
 That they will hear
 The drums that are our sorrow and our pride.
 Death 's but a shadow on the river-side
 When all the trumpets blow—
 They in their time shall know,
 O heart, the trumpets on the farther side :
 Heart, the proud trumpets on the farther side. . . .

After our war, O heart, our quiet tide.
 These also will be filled with fierce desire,
 Heap incense on a sacrificial fire,
 And dream a hundred deaths they would have
 died,
 And greatly long, breaking their hearts to ride
 Down the long barriers :
 O heart, the barriers ; the peaceful barriers
 We built about the years.

Maybe

. . . Maybe maybe,
Since youth is generous
That they will reach to us
Their hands in one of their great comradeships ;
Seeing that from our lips
They heard a tale of love and agony ;
Seeing we too have walked their burning ways
In great heroic days ;
Seeing that we, recklessly, royally,
Gave all our world that they, they and their world
might be.

Sometimes I think, O heart, that they will guess
Through all their restlessness
The love we buried deep in fields of France,
And when their battle sways
Call greetings to our days
As we called to the dark days of Vaal Kranz,
O heart, before we broke our hearts,
Colenso and Vaal Kranz.

August 1916.

On the Chilterns

WE lay out on the Chiltern hills all day,
 And watched the shadows sweep the clouds
 away

From Surrey, Berkshire, Hampshire, Buckingham.
 The sun was blown to a red oriflamme,
 September had kissed Summer long good-bye.
 And then she turned to me and asked if I
 When the time came, would be afraid to die ;
 Our eyes met and we smiled, she wondered why.

How should we be afraid when our loves led
 Our hearts, oh long ago, half through Death's door,
 Seeing that our most dear and faithful Dead
 Will mark the road for us they passed before ;
 And since we miss them though our lives are sweet,
 Perhaps they'll be a little lonely too,
 And when the door swings back we'll turn to meet
 The laughing-hearted friends that once we knew.

September 1916.

Autumn, 1916

LATE roses beat against the wall,
The swallows gather by the sea,
And Summer goes from England now,
A woman weeping bitterly ;
O Summer crying, Summer sighing,
Ease you of your pain,
For all your tears the barren years
Will not bring back your love again.

Kind Summer filled our empty hearts
With love of little things,
With tiny joys of wide-eyed flowers,
And whirr of happy wings ;
And Summer goes from England now,
And tired hearts and sad
With small love left are now bereft
Of everything they had.

The firelight throws upon the wall
Dream shadows as of old,
But there's no fire in all the world
Can keep our hearts from cold ;

The lamps are dim behind the blind
That once shone bravely bright,
And love alone by the hearthstone
Keeps watch and ward to-night.

Dead roses lie beneath the wall
As Youth lies at the ages' feet,
The leaping shadows flicker low,
The newsboy calls along the street ;
O dear days crying, dead dreams sighing,
Hush you of your pain,
For all your tears the barren years
Will not bring back your love again,
Can never bring your love again.

October 1916.

Girl's Song, 1916

IN heaven there be many stars
For the glory of the Lord,
But one most bright which is the light
Upon my true love's sword,
To show that he always for me
Keepeth good watch and ward.

In England now few lamps there be
Since Death flies low by night,
But brave behind the lowered blind
Shall mine burn steady bright,
That he may know for him also
Burneth a kindly light.

October 1916.

‘I will go back’

I WILL go back to the hills again
That are sisters to the sea,
The bare hills, the brown hills
That stand eternally,
And their strength shall be my strength,
And their joy my joy shall be.

I will go back to the hills again,
To the hills I knew of old,
To the fells that bare the straight larch woods
To keep their farms from cold ;
For I know that when the spring-time comes
The whin will be breaking gold.

There are no hills like the Wasdale hills
When spring comes up the dale,
Nor any woods like the larch woods
Where primroses blow pale ;
And the shadows flicker quiet-wise
On the stark ridge of Black Sail.

I have

I have been up and down the world
To the Earth's either end,
And left my heart in a field in France
Beside my truest friend ;
And joy goes over, but love endures,
And the hills, unto the end.

I will go back to the hills again
When the day's work is done,
And set my hands against the rocks
Warm with an April sun,
And see the night creep down the fells
And the stars climb one by one.

November 1916.

Lamplight

WE planned to shake the world together, you
and I

Being young, and very wise ;
Now in the light of the green shaded lamp
Almost I see your eyes
Light with the old gay laughter ; you and I
Dreamed greatly of an Empire in those days,
Setting our feet upon laborious ways,
And all you asked of fame
Was crossed swords in the Army List,
My Dear, against your name.

We planned a great Empire together, you and I,
Bound only by the sea ;
Now in the quiet of a chill Winter's night
Your voice comes hushed to me
Full of forgotten memories : you and I
Dreamed great dreams of our future in those days,
Setting our feet on undiscovered ways,
And all I asked of fame
A scarlet cross on my breast, my Dear,
For the swords by your name.

We

We shall never shake the world together, you and I,
For you gave your life away ;
And I think my heart was broken by the war,
Since on a summer day
You took the road we never spoke of : you and I
Dreamed greatly of an Empire in those days ;
You set your feet upon the Western ways
And have no need of fame—
There's a scarlet cross on my breast, my Dear,
And a torn cross with your name.

December 1916.

‘ I Dreamed ’

I DREAMED I stood alone in the white space-fulness which men call air.

There was no sound of speech or movement there,
But only my own quickened breath to hear,
And the vast voiceless silence everywhere.

Then through the empty archway of the sky
I saw an angel ride,

And as he rode he cried

‘ For England Victory.’

And all my heart went out to those who died

So that for all my pride

My voice broke tremulously.

And then I dreamed

He drew rein at my side,

The world was full of stars, his helmet gleamed,

(His eyes were like twin stars) almost it seemed

As if the moon herself hilted his sword,

And I could find no word.

I dreamed he spoke, and the stars leaning down

Made for him a great crown,

So that he stood in light,

And all behind was night,

Blue, unforgettable, unfathomable night.

His

His voice was as the voice of many waters, clear
 And full of music as a violin,
 Kind as the waves that lap a thirsty shore,
 Deep with a million sorrows hid therein ;
 It was as if a blackbird sang
 That the day might begin.

‘ Have you no answer then for me,’ he said,
 (And bowed his bright head)
 ‘ No laughter though for joy they went to die ? ’
 Then I
 Heard my voice break unnumbered miles away
 Upon the great roof of the world. ‘ Remember
 they
 Gave of their best. Friendship they gave ; the
 love they hardly knew ;
 All the dear little foolish things of earth,
 And all the splendid things they meant to do ;
 Sunsets, and dawns, and grey skies breaking blue,
 All undiscovered worlds, and fairy seas,
 And the lips of their girl-lovers. These
 Gave Victory to the world, and Beauty which is
 Truth ;
 And glad gay generous Love ; the unconquerable
 Love of Youth.

And

And I

How should I speak of Victory who went not out
to die ? ’

He spoke, and all the longing in the world

Broke in his voice, ‘ There came

Yesterday even unto Heaven’s Gate

One from your war, and begged us leave to wait

For one who should come after, whom he called

“ Comrade in Arms ”, and smiled, and spoke
your name.’

I dreamed :

And a moon-hilted sword lay in my hands it
seemed.

January 1917.

Kitchener of Khartum

*To such as in the Newspapers or elsewhere
have lately blamed him*

YOU who fought fears since you had him to lead
In the cold anguish of your first distress,
And took the labour of his life to make
A bulwark for your years of idleness ;
Clung to his name, sheltered behind his strength,
How dare you judge him failure or success ?

You who were each an Empire went your ways,
Shuddered at death and laughed at thought of
war,
And when it came, knew nothing ; called to him
To keep the Terror from your flimsy door ;
You who had tied his hands through strength
withheld
And knowledge flouted, years and years before.

You—you took all he gave ; he who took up
Burden of Empire that was yours to bear,
And walked through hells you'll never know to find
The hard-won wisdom of a soldier there ;
And went out into silence on the sea,
And left his memory to your keeping here.

You

You that are each this England, you who live
As England lives, by such great travailing,
Have you at this high hour no better gift
Than your safe smug disparagement can bring ?
He that died, died for England ; England lives,
And you are England ; that 's the bitter thing.

February 1917.

Young Love, 1917

THEY talk to me of Love, these people, say
That he's an emperor royally passionate,
Recklessly eager, intolerant of delay,
Certain of vict'ry, confidently great,
And mock me that I've missed him on the way,
Flaunting the banners of their proud estate.

We did not think love like that long ago,
In the old days ; you used to come to tea
Often I think ; sometimes I hardly know
If it were love, or friendship ; I can see
Your lamp slide down the hill red on the snow
And hear my voice call to you merrily.

We never spoke of loving in those days,
But when we planned we always planned for two ;
Love has, I think, sometimes quite simple ways ;
You used to like the teacups white and blue,
And there was always honey for your praise,
And gold brown crumpets I would toast for you.
Do

Do you remember how we used to sail
 Down the Long Reach aflood with April rain,
 And lost our lee-boards once, and had to bail,
 And nearly foundered beating back again,
 And when we'd safely weathered our small gale
 The house lights twinkling safely up the lane.

Can you remember summer time, the wheat
 Blue with corn-cockles? Love's a gentler thing
 Than they believe, I think ; we used to meet
 Early on summer days and you would bring
 A map, and sandwiches and pears to eat,
 And one worn sixpence for our wandering.

We shared all things, our memories, our dreams,
 But never spoke of loving, you and I,
 And then the War came ; just to-night it seems
 Only like yesterday—I wonder why—
 And I've your letters—how the ward fire gleams—
 Somehow I never thought that you would die.

They have known War, these people, yet they hold
 The love we knew a subject for their jest ;
 We two who loved each other never told
 Our love, but knew each loved the other best ;
 And now you're dead and I am growing old
 I don't want Love from any of the rest.

February 1917.

'After the War'

AFTER the War perhaps I'll sit again
Out on the terrace where I sat with you,
And see the changeless sky and hills beat blue
And live an afternoon of summer through.

I shall remember then, and sad at heart
For the lost day of happiness we knew,
Wish only that some other man were you
And spoke my name as once you used to do.

February 1917.

Spring, 1917

LIFT up your hearts ! Lord, we have lifted
them

Above the tumult and the tears of War
To the dear promise of Thy Christmas star,
We lift them up, but Thou art very far.

Lift up your hearts ! O Lord, who for our need
Givest again the promise of Thy Spring,
Grant a small hope to light our travailing,
And for our hearts to love some little thing.

February 1917.

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